



Colloquium Brief: CBRNe: The Ongoing Challenge - Kingston Conference On International Security

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Key Insights.

- Little 'e' (explosive events) suicide bombings have their conceptual origins in tactical actions (destructive) between military forces—including World War II Japanese Kamikazes—that, in time, evolved into acts of terrorism with strategic (disruptive) political outcomes.
- IED fatigue exists for troops in Afghanistan and for policymakers in Ottawa, Canada, and Washington, DC.
- From a military perspective, weapons of mass destruction (WMD) have always been considered the

most dangerous potential challenge to be encountered in war. The threat of terrorist groups acquiring chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive events (CBRNe) materials has grown considerably and has led governments and international organizations to adopt regulations and programs to defend populations against associated risks.

- The humanitarian and environmental consequences that would be caused by the use of nuclear weapons are readily recognized.
- North Korea's proliferation program consists of four key parts: 1) WMD and the platforms to carry it (ballistic missiles); 2) conventional weapons sales; 3) refurbishment of Soviet era weapons for countries that still use them; and, 4) technical and military assistance and advising.
- Two types of risk are associated with the local Canadian CBRNe threat. One enabler is the latent potential within the general population and its subgroups to be radicalized to the point of sympathizing with, supporting, or even committing a CBRNe event. Networks are another enabler, specifically cross-border ones since much of the CBRNe material is highly controlled within Canada and thus more readily obtainable outside the country.
- Military and federal support to civil society function much like strategic mutual aid within an incident command structure that is public agency (local and state/province civilian) led.
- The Canadian perspective on the five questions guiding CRBN response policy are: 1) How has the strategic environment evolved? (How has the CBRNe threat evolved?); 2) What new capabilities should be part of our future tool kit? (What have we learned from Syria?); 3) How do we improve the way we do business? 4) Can we be more interdependent with allies (domestic and international levels)? and, 5) What are the tradeoffs we need to make (investment balancing)?

Introduction.

The 9th annual Kingston Conference on International Security (KCIS) was held in Kingston, Canada, May 12-14, 2014. This important North American defense research event has been held since 2006 and represents an integral bilateral academic strategic outreach interchange between Canadian and American Landpower forces. This year's conference theme focused on "CBRNe: The Ongoing Challenge" and was co-sponsored by the Centre for International and Defence Policy, Queen's University; the Canadian Army Doctrine and Training Centre (CADTC) of the Canadian Forces, Royal Military College of Canada; and the Canadian Army Command and Staff College; in cooperation with the Strategic Studies Institute (SSI), U.S. Army War College (USAWC). The 115 conference participants and attendees represented senior industrial, government, academic, military, and policing interests from across the United States, Canada, and the European Union (EU). The USAWC was represented by an SSI faculty presenter (Dr. Bunker) and, in the audience, by USAWC fellows attending Queen's University.

CBRNe, as a conference theme, refers to chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive events that have the capacity to threaten Canada and its allies. The conference was divided into seven panels: I. From NBC to CBRNe: The Evolution of a Threat; II. The Current Threats—Global; III. The Current Threats—Regional; IV. The Current Threats—Local; V. The International Challenges; VI. The Domestic Challenges; and, VII. Policy Implications. The keynote address, “Global Governance of Nuclear Technology: An Insider’s View,” was delivered by Ambassador John Barrett, Canadian Nuclear Association.

Main presentation themes and lessons learned from KCIS 2014 included:

- Little ‘e’ suicide bombings have their conceptual origins in tactical actions (destructive) between military forces—including World War II Japanese Kamikazes—that, in time, evolved into acts of terrorism with strategic (disruptive) political outcomes. These suicide bombings—both individual and vehicle borne improvised explosive devices (VBIED or car bombs) are mainly conventional in nature and directed against soft targets but have two contemporary variants: 1) stealth-based bombs (worn close to the body or disguised as common items) utilized against hard targets; and, 2) the ad hoc use of small ‘e’ dispersed biological and chemical agents against soft targets (fortunately with little-to-no success).
- IED fatigue exists for troops in Afghanistan and for policymakers in Ottawa and Washington, DC. Further, on the home fronts, low-level bombing incidents are a daily occurrence. For instance, in 2011, Canada faced 183 domestic bomb related incidents. IEDs represent a pervasive global threat carried out by terrorists, insurgents, pirates, criminals, and other violent nonstate actors. Canada seeks to disrupt (degrade) threat networks via the interagency Countering Threat Network (CTN) and Attacking the Network (AtN) in coordination with national and regional allies and partners in the pre-incident (“left of the boom”) and execution phases, respectively.
- From a military perspective, weapons of mass destruction (WMD) have always been considered the most dangerous potential challenge to be encountered in war. This situation has changed over the last few decades with sub-state threats more of a concern in this regard. The threat of terrorist groups acquiring CBRNe materials has grown considerably and has led governments and international organizations to adopt regulations and programs to defend populations against associated risks. One such governmental response plan, the European Union (EU) CBRNe Action Plan, seeks to reduce the threat and damage from such incidents to the citizens of the EU as its overall goal.
- The humanitarian and environmental consequences that would be caused by the use of nuclear weapons are readily recognized. Yet all of the nuclear-armed states are modernizing

their nuclear arsenals and some are continuing to expand them. Differing views exist concerning North American policy options related to reframing nuclear weapons as a defensive strategy. Human security (extra-sovereign based) views—which see such weapons as a threat to global populations—are at odds with more traditional, and dominant, positions held by many states—derived from the tenets of realism and the undisputed political benefits nuclear arsenals provide. As a result, due to the benefits provided, the dynastic North Korea regime is seen as unwilling to give up its nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles programs under any circumstances.

- North Korea's proliferation program consists of four key parts: 1) WMD and the platforms to carry it (ballistic missiles); 2) conventional weapons sales; 3) refurbishment of Soviet era weapons for countries that still use them; and, 4) technical and military assistance and advising. These programs have continued in the Kim Jong-un era, and in some instances, have been expanded. North Korean proliferation presents an international security dilemma that national policymakers from across the globe should attempt to contain. The yearly profits from the North Korea proliferation regime may be in the billions of dollars.
- Two types of risk are associated with the local Canadian CBRNe threat. One enabler is the latent potential within the general population and its subgroups to be radicalized to the point of sympathizing with, supporting, or even committing a CBRNe event. The evidence suggests that those most predisposed toward resorting to politically motivated violent extremism can actually be known and identified because they exhibit a distinct pattern of attributes. Networks are another enabler, specifically cross-border ones since much of the CBRNe material is highly controlled within Canada and thus more readily obtainable outside the country. An appropriate response to these enablers is that of intelligence-led policing with resources focused on illicit flows rather than on border interdiction ("holding the line").
- Military and federal support to civil society function much like strategic mutual aid—evident in the presentations provided by Joint Task Force (JTF)-Civil Support, U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) and CBRNe Operations, Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)—within an incident command structure that is public agency (local and state/province civilian) led. The intent of military support to such operations is to augment and enhance post-incident response activities and, in the case of the RCMP (a national policing service), to engage in forensic investigation. Both Canada and the United States generally have robust responder forces (law enforcement, fire, and health) to contend with small 'e' (IEDs), industrial hazardous material (HAZMAT), and some radiological threats.
- The Canadian perspective on the five questions guiding CBRNe response policy are: 1) How

has the strategic environment evolved? (How has the CBRNe threat evolved?); 2) What new capabilities should be part of our future tool kit? (What have we learned from Syria?); 3) How do we improve the way we do business? 4) Can we be more interdependent with allies (domestic and international levels)? and, 5) What are the tradeoffs we need to make (investment balancing)?

Distinguished participants included: Lieutenant General Marguis Hainse, Commander, Canadian Army; former Ambassador Marius Grinius; Major General John Adams (Ret.), Queen's University; Major General Stephen Bowes, Commander, CADTC; Lieutenant General Stuart Beare, Commander, Canadian Joint Operations Command; and Major General Christopher Coates, Deputy Commander Continental, Canadian Joint Operations Command. An academic engagement component was reflected in presentations by: Erika Simpson, Western University; Amy Smithson, Monterey Institute of International Studies; Bruce E. Bechtol, Angelo State University, Texas; Peter Jones, University of Ottawa; Richard Parent, Simon Fraser University; and Frank Harvey, Dalhousie University.

The conference was an excellent example of scholar-practitioner and academic-military exchange and helped to foster the development and sharing of new ideas concerning CBRNe response and mitigation requirements. It also provided an opportunity for international exchange, between the United States, Canada, and the EU, in a cost-effective venue. Additionally, comments at the conference indicate that the desire exists for greater senior U.S. defense leadership participation in this important conference series.

For additional information on this conference and next year's annual event, contact the conference coordinator, Ms. Maureen Bartram. For a more encompassing conference overview, see the final Queen's University *KCIS 2014 Report* written by Ms. Leah Sarson, which will soon be posted at the conference website. An archival Twitter feed also exists at #KCIS2014.

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